

HB ~~117~~ 1192

My name is Paul Schlagel

I am a third generation farmer and my son who is sitting in the audience today, will be the fourth.

A couple of years ago as I was working on another project similar to this one, we concluded that we had just planted our families 100th sugarbeet crop in the St Vrain Valley

We take pride in growing safe, quality, affordable food.

We also take pride in the land but also in going to a grocery store and purchasing the food products that come from our farms, including sugar, meat products, and beer from a local brewery

Over the years we have seen production advances that allow a crop to grow with fewer inputs, in a more sustainable manner, with less insecticide and more yield.

The environmental impacts alone through the use of improved seeds through genetic modification – just one more step in breeding advances – have allowed conservation tillage with more arable soil staying in place and not rising as dust in the atmosphere, less runoff and water conservation.

Biotech crops have contributed to significantly reducing the release of greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural practices.

As board member of ASGA I have had the fortune to observe, first hand, the comprehensive regulatory system designed to regulate ALL food as safe, regardless of its production method.

And, the American Medical Association (AMA) has stated there is no scientific justification for the special labeling of foods containing GM ingredients.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) oversees food labeling at the Federal level in the United States.

The FDA requires labeling of food products containing GM ingredients if there is a meaningful difference in the safety, composition or nutrition of the crop from which they were derived.

Because of the comprehensive approach taken by the FDA, there is no need for a state

by state, costly regulatory approach.

Food companies may voluntarily label products to communicate information about certain production practices, such as products that are certified organic under the National Organic Program or products labeled as not containing GM ingredients.

U.S. law allows for voluntary labeling provided that the information is accurate, truthful and avoids misleading consumers about the food.

Consumer choice is abundantly clear today – there doesn't need to be a mandate for labeling since consumers today have the choice to purchase foods certified or branded to have been grown without GM seeds; such as those certified under the Non-GMO project and those said to be grown with USDA certified organic seeds.

The cost of mandatory labeling, such as what is proposed under HB 1192 is misleading, unnecessary and arbitrary, with many exemptions.

It will cost consumers, food businesses and farmers.

And our tax dollars will be used to enforce it.

Worse, it may remove my ability to produce a quality product with all of its advances and benefits to my family's farm.

Farming has always been a challenge.

In the front range in Colorado one of the biggest is water

Just this year drought resistant corn will be planted in Colorado saving precious water resources and increasing yields

We have efforts to integrate nitrogen producing capabilities into major crops starting with corn.

And yes these are GM events

And on a personal note, this bill mandates a paper trail that will be costly for growers of many types of crops.

Since I farm in Boulder County, I have had to engage in a number of local policy maneuvers the past several years designed to stop the growing of biotech crops.

I see this bill as just one more maneuver by those who oppose advances in breeding,

and want consumers to be scared into buying organic.

Please remember that the real goal of the proponents of labeling is to stop the use of GM seeds.

After 18 years of commercialization, three trillion meals served and not one safety issue, to me such a labeling policy change such as that proposed by HB 1192 means fewer options for growers in the future and higher food costs for consumers.

My family and I ask you to vote No on HB 1192 so that we can continue to produce food and grain on our family farm that is safe, of high quality and affordable for Colorado consumers.